



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## Redevelopment Board Minutes 11/17/2008

Arlington Redevelopment Board  
 Minutes of November 17, 2008

Members Present: Andrew West, Chair  
 Christopher Loreti, Vice Chair  
 Ed Tsoi  
 Roland Chaput  
 Bruce Fitzsimmons

Also Present: Kevin O'Brien  
 Laura Wiener  
 David Berry

Andy West called the meeting to order at 7:00 and opened the public hearing on a special permit application for 821-837 Mass. Ave. CVS proposed to build a drug store on the site. Kevin O'Brien explained that the hearing had been originally advertised for October 20th but that the developer had requested to continue the hearing on that date because CVS had acquired the rights to more land and wanted to modify its proposal. He continued saying that the modified application required a new advertisement and that at the end of the evening the Board would continue this hearing to a date that would be advertised for the amended proposal. Thereafter the hearings would cover the entire modified proposal. He added that people should feel free to comment on any part of the proposal this evening.

Atty. Mary Winstanley O'Connor began the presentation of the project. She introduced Paul Beck of Gershman Brown Crowley the developer, Phil Henry of R.J. O'Connell & Associates, Inc., Sarah Connolly, of BKA Architects and Jeffrey Noyes whose family owns the property. Ms. O'Connor explained that the modified proposal involved removing the Atwood house on the property and that they have tried to find someone to take the house and move it. They had applied for a demolition permit in February, 2008 and the Historical Commission had put a twelve month hold on the demolition so that if the Noyes family could not find someone to take the house it would be demolished. Other members of the team explained parts of the development.

Andy West then asked the Board for questions. He noted that the enclosure around the dumpster on the drawings at the hearing was brick which was different than the drawings submitted previously. Paul Beck explained that they had made some improvements and the final drawings would reflect the correct features. Chris Loreti observed that the model did not show the standing sign that the application requested. Phil Henry replied that the sign was part of the application and they would put it on the model. Chris Loreti then asked Ms. O'Connor what permits they were seeking. She replied that they wished permits for the use, number 6.16, for signs that exceed the bylaw standards, and sought a waiver from the requirement for open space within the parking lot, and for accessory use 8.17 for the ATM and drive-thru pharmacy. Chris Loreti asked her if she considered the drive-thru as an accessory use and Ms. O'Connor replied that she did.

After a few more Board questions, Andy West asked if members of the public had questions or comments. John Worden criticized the possible destruction of the house and felt that the ATM was an inappropriate use. Carol Kowalski offered pictures of CVS stores in other towns, including Andover, that were far more appropriate architecturally. They showed CVS stores that were built right to the curb. She thought the road in front of the store was a danger to pedestrians and asked questioned how many times it would actually be used. She thought it would be especially dangerous for kids coming from the high school right next door. David Gray who heads the property committee for the First Baptist Church abutting the site on the east said he was concerned about kids cutting through property to the church property. John Leonard of Grove St. asked if some of the outdoor lighting could be on motion detector and observed that the dumpsters tend to be a hazard and can't be seen by police. Charlie Skidmore, principal of Arlington High School, abutter to the west, indicated that he was worried about the danger to pedestrians from trucks at the site. He was worried about security and hoped that there could be some good arrangement for students to have meaningful jobs at the store if it is built. Clarissa Rowe, speaking as a representative of Precinct 8 asked the applicant to re-think the single use and see if they could accommodate another use on the site, maybe a second story. She thought the proposal was not an appropriate design, especially as Arlington is more and more a bike and pedestrian community. She didn't want the Board to waive the requirement for open space in the parking lot. She hoped for a high LEED score and expressed concern that the stormwater runoff was directed toward a flood plain. She hoped that the rain garden was sensitively planted and not just a rock basin. Carol Kowalski said she hoped that the lighting would be turned off after hours. Christine Frazier said that there were two ATM's across the street and the neighborhood didn't need another pharmacy. Dr. Michael Foley said that we already have a lot of CVS's and that a medical facility was interested in locating at the site, he challenged CVS to re-think their plan to accommodate the use.

Andy West observed that there were a lot of good comments. He said that he wanted CVS to address the big issues of multiple uses of the site and the density (not enough) and then look at the design of the building(s). Ms. O'Connor observed that the Noyes family, owners of the property, had talked with Caritas about medical use but they could not pay the rent. CVS was a big financial institution. Paul Beck said that they put a lot more brick in this proposal – they could change the skin. Andy West asked about including other uses on the site and asked what would work with CVS. Paul Beck indicated that the Noyes family wants value for their use of the land. He said the layout of the buildings is constrained by how trucks access the building; they had looked at other arrangements but hadn't found one that worked. Andy West asked if that meant they were open to an additional use. Paul Beck replied that they were – sort of. Andy West asked about the Andover design. Paul Beck replied that it was a central business district model and they didn't see the same pedestrian traffic at this site.

Chris Loreti asked about the parking at the East Arlington CVS and Paul Beck replied that they were underparked. Andy West said CVS had the opportunity to make a great block. Why did they have only one entrance? Paul Beck replied that it was for security and number of cashiers. He said they would consider any change as long as it served the customer which is CVS. Bruce Fitzsimmons asked what their customer base was. Paul Beck replied that it was 10,000 to 15,000 population and they needed 75 to 80 parking spaces. Bruce Fitzsimmons observed that there were parking spaces on the left side of the building, so why did they need the road in front of the building. He also asked why they couldn't comply with the requirement for open space in the interior of the lot. Paul Beck said they would look at the open space problem again. Bruce Fitzsimmons then asked about the LEED narrative and Phil Henry said he would respond at the next hearing.

Roly Chaput wondered how many buildings of this design CVS had and asked if there was leeway on the design. Paul Beck said there was leeway. Roly Chaput stated that he had a real problem with demolishing a significantly historic building. Ed Tsoi said that the proposal doesn't fit the site and asked if they'd looked elsewhere in Arlington. Paul Beck said they had – for years. Ed Tsoi observed that the design feels like there is too much going on and asked the developer to look at it again.

Andy West expressed concern about two curb cuts, loss of historical significance; he asked if a restaurant could be added, and asked that they come back and show how the development fits on an Arlington street. He said it could be a nice block, it could have more building fronting on the street. He asked that they show how the development could work without the street in front of the building. Paul Beck wondered how he could satisfy CVS's need for convenient parking for customers. Andy west asked him to think outside the box, make it relate to high school next door.

Bruce Fitzsimmons said that we think of this site as urban infill, not suburban. Chris Loreti asked Paul Beck what his relationship is to CVS. Paul Beck replied that he is paid a developer's fee, he has no equity interest. Chris Loreti observed that the CVS in Davis Sq. has two uses at the one site. Paul Beck said he would look again at the pedestrian counts at the site. Chris Loreti continued that the parking lot at the east Arlington Walgreen's, which has less parking per floor area than the CVS proposal and is never full. He observed that the CVS proposal was for a development with an f.a.r of 0.18 where 1.0 is allowed. The Town is looking for business development and increased tax base. Chris Loreti said he wasn't sure that a drive-thru was allowed and asked how many CVS's had drive-thru's. Paul Beck said he couldn't answer that but said that CVS won't build a free standing store without a drive-thru. Chris Loreti also said that he didn't think the Board could approve a sign over fifteen feet high.

Andy west showed two alternative designs which included a second use on tracing paper placed over the proposed design and asked the developer to consider them. Chris Loreti asked if the owner, Jeff Noyes, would consider an additional use on the property. Jeff Noyes replied that he was merely observing, but he was not in principal opposed to other uses on the site as long as they could still lease the site to CVS.

Kevin O'Brien then asked the questions that the Town Engineer had submitted relative to storm drainage. Phil Henry responded in part and said he would respond to all at the next meeting.

The Board and developer then discussed the date for the next hearing and Chris Loreti moved that the hearing be continued to December 22, 2008 at 7PM in the second floor conference room of the Town Hall annex and that the hearing coincide with the hearing to be advertised for the new accessory use, no. 8.17. Roly Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Andy West declared a five minute recess to allow those who wanted to clear the room.

At 9:30 Andy West re-convened the meeting and asked that the Board talk about the alewife Brook Greenway Improvement project. He asked Clarissa Rowe to fill the Board in on recent events. Clarissa Rowe indicated that in recent meetings with DCR and the neighbors it had been decided that DCR would build a paved sidewalk on the Dilboy Field side of the brook between Broadway and Mystic Valley Parkway and to then build an aggregate path on the Arlington side. She said there was some concern that DCR won't build the path on the Dilboy Field side soon enough. She added that the Selectmen would have a public meeting to hear further testimony on the proposal on November 24 and she hoped the ARB would attend.

The Board then reviewed minutes of previous meetings. After some discussion in each case, the Board took the following votes.

Bruce Fitzsimmons moved that the Board approve the minutes of October 6, 2008. Chris Loreti seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Roly Chaput moved that the Board approve the minutes of October 20, 2008. Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Bruce Fitzsimmons moved that the Board approve the minutes of October 27, 2008. Roly Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Chris Loreti moved that the Board approve the minutes of October 28, 2008. Bruce Fitzsimmons seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

Chris Loreti moved that the Board approve the minutes of November 6, 2008. Roly Chaput seconded the motion and the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve.

The Board adjourned at 10:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin J.O'Brien